



Darlington Rural District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

TO THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1905.

R. H. MEIKLE, M.B., C.M.,
Medical Officer of Health.

DARLINGTON RURAL DISTRICT.

Population estimated at last Census	...	...	9,591
Area of District in Acres	...	...	37,990

SUB-DISTRICTS, WITH POPULATION.

Cockerton	...	...	...	...	1,401
Haughton-le-Skerne	...	...	...	...	1,195
Heighington	...	...	...	..	2,515
Coniscliffe	...	...	...	...	1,180
Middleton-St.-George	...	...	...	...	1,465
Hurworth	...	...	...	...	1,835
					9,591

To the Chairman and Members of the
Darlington Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Fifth Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitation of your district during the year 1905. I have taken all my estimates from the census of 1901, viz.:—9,591.

There are a few points of interest which I may refer to, although they are included in the body of the report.

The birth-rate for the year is considerably above the average for the decade 1895—1904.

The death-rate for the year is satisfactory, and is a little above the average for the same decade. The number of infant deaths is considerably lower for the decade 1895—1904.

Fifty-two notifications of infectious disease have been received during the year. In Diphtheria alone, 24 cases were notified.

There has been considerable activity in your sanitary department during the year. The methods of inspection, distribution of disinfectants, disinfection of articles of clothing and premises are all working satisfactorily.

The provision of a gratuitous supply of Diphtheria anti-toxic serum and examination of specimens bacteriologically is much appreciated, and taken advantage of by local practitioners.

The question of sewage disposal has been one of the principal sanitary considerations during the year.

There were 279 births (140 males and 139 females) registered in your district during the year, as compared with 255 in 1904. This gives a birth-rate of 29·0 per 1,000 persons, as against 26·5 per 1,000 in 1904—this is considerably above the average.

There were 154 deaths (71 males and 83 females) registered in your district during the year, and 10 persons who belong to your district, died in Institutions without the district. This gives a death-rate of 16·0 per 1,000, as compared with 15·1 per 1,000 in 1904.

The deaths occurring in Public Institutions without the district are as follows:—

Union Workhouse, Darlington	...	...	4
The Hospital, Darlington	...	...	3
County Lunatic Asylum, Sedgefield	...	...	1
Borough Hospital, Darlington	...	...	2
			—
			10

It is gratifying to report that the infant mortality is lower than the preceding year, and very considerably lower than in 1903. The following table shows the comparison:—

In 1905	...	...	...	30 deaths
„ 1904	...	...	...	35 „
„ 1903	...	...	...	53 „

And of these 30 in 1905, 6 were due to premature birth, so really never had a chance of life from the start; and I am of opinion that if a lady health inspector was adopted, the infant mortality could be still considerably reduced, as many infants die through the gross ignorance of mothers. Medical practitioners can certainly give instructions to mothers; but what is required, is one to regularly visit them, and see that those instructions are carried out, and, where necessary, to give instructions themselves. The following table shows the ages at which death occurred:—

Under 1 year	..	...	..	...	30
Between the age of 1— 5 years	..	...	..	..	45
,, ,, ,, 5—15	„	...	..	..	3
,, ,, ,, 15—25	„	...	..	..	7
,, ,, ,, 25—65	„	..	..	..	39
,, ,, ,, 65 and upwards	..	..	..	..	30
					—
					154

The principal causes of death under one year being Convulsions, Tubercular disease, Diarrhoea and Premature Birth, and those account for 30 deaths as compared with 31 in 1904, giving a death-rate of 3·1 per 1,000, as against 3·2 per 1,000 in 1904.

Heart Disease caused 16 deaths, as against 10 in 1904, giving a death-rate of 1·6 per 1,000, as against 1·0 per 1,000 in 1904.

Consumption caused 8 deaths as against 4 in 1904, giving a death-rate of .8 per 1,000 as compared with .4 per 1,000 in 1904. This shows a considerable increase to the preceding year, and 6 of these 8 deaths occurred between the ages of 25 and 65 years. If patients were more careful as to destruction of the sputa and free access of fresh air to their houses, many members of a family might be saved where one member already has the disease.

Two deaths are registered as due to suicide and 4 by a coroner after inquest.

24 persons died above the age of 80 years as compared with 12 in 1904, giving an average of 84 years, the oldest reaching the advanced age of 89 years, who was resident at Haughton-le-Skerne.

Zymotic diseases have caused 6 deaths as compared with 9 in 1904, giving a death-rate of .6 per 1,000 as compared with .9 in 1904.

Cancer is responsible for 7 deaths as compared with 11 in 1904, giving a death-rate of .7 per 1,000.

The distribution of deaths in point of seasons was as follows, with comparison of the preceding year:—

	1905.	1904.		1905.	1904.
January	... 12	... 18	|	July ...	... 17 ... 2
February	... 14	... 13	|	August ...	11 ... 14
March	... 12	... 6	|	September ...	11 ... 10
April ..	.. 9	... 8	|	October ...	18 ... 13
May ..	... 15	... 12	|	November ...	8 ... 14
June ..	... 13	... 14	|	December ...	14 ... 21

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There have been 52 cases of infectious disease notified during the year as compared with 50 in 1904; this shows a slight increase. Of the 52 cases notified, 13 cases were removed to the Hospital for treatment, viz:—9 of Diphtheria, 2 of Scarlet Fever, and 2 of Enteric Fever. The following table is a summary:—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	24
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	18
Erysipelas	..	...	...	...	5
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	4
Small Pox	..	...	...	...	1
					—
			TOTAL	...	52

The 24 Diphtheria cases were notified from the following places:— Blackwell 1, Brussleton 3, Cockerton 2, Haughton-le-Skerne 2, Heighington 1, Hurworth 9, Hurworth Place 3, Redworth 2, Summerhouse 1.

SCARLET FEVER.

Haughton-le-Skerne 5, Hurworth 1, Middleton-St.-George 6, Low Middleton 2, Piercebridge 1, Sadberge 1, Neasham 2.

ERYSIPELAS.

Aycliffe 2, Cockerton 1, Harrowgate Village 1, Middleton-St.-George 1.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Cockerton 1, Haughton-le-Skerne 1, Heighington 1, Hurworth 1.

SMALL POX.

Haughton-le-Skerne 1.

The Diphtheria cases show a considerable increase, being double the number of cases dealt with in 1904. 12 of these cases occurred at Hurworth and Hurworth Place. As each of these cases was notified, I visited them as soon as possible, and also had the assistance of Dr. Hill, County Medical Officer of Health. The cause of the outbreak in the first instance may have been due to decaying vegetable matter in the bed of the river Tees, which was extremely low the whole summer, and which was a regular playground for the children. No doubt several of the cases were due to direct infection. Instances have come to my knowledge where outbreaks of this description have been due to the first case being so mild that the parents have considered the children merely suffering from a sore throat, probably as the result of a cold, etc.; and it is not until a severe case occurs has it been possible to trace the primary cause of infection; the children are still allowed to attend school, and it is quite possible that from that one case of sore throat and through the agency of the school, the disease may assume epidemic proportions. The water supply during the epidemic was extremely defective, and I am still of opinion that it played a very important part in the epidemic. All the cases of Diphtheria were either children or adults teaching those children.

The Scarlet Fever cases were all of a mild type, confined to children, and the disease could not be said to be epidemic in any part of the district.

One case of Small Pox was no doubt due to direct infection, and occurred at Haughton-le-Skerne. Immediately on being notified, I visited the premises together with your Sanitary Inspector. The mother of the patient flatly refused the removal of the case to the Hospital, so I gave full instructions for isolation and had the house closely watched for a time to guard against any person leaving or entering. I discovered afterwards that two persons had left the house and gone into Darlington between the time of the case being notified and my visit, although I was in prompt attendance in answer to a telegram from the Inspector. I consider it very fortunate that from this one case no serious epidemic occurred, and I cannot speak too strongly against cases of this description being nursed at home, especially where the house adjoins a main thoroughfare; and the extreme selfishness of the mother of the patient as to the public safety, and to her sceptic remarks about trained nurses, remarking that no trained nurse could nurse her son equal to herself, giving this as a reason for her refusal to his removal. After the patient had completely recovered, the whole house was most thoroughly disinfected and fumigated, the bedding being sent to the Fever Hospital.

At all houses where infectious disease occurred the usual methods of disinfecting have been carried out.

During the year a great amount of sanitary work has been done, and taking the district generally I consider you have been very free from Infectious Disease.

Aycliffe.—Only two cases of infectious disease occurred at this village during the year, and that Erysipelas. The water supply still continues good and abundant. Great improvements have been carried out to old property, making the house question less serious.

Blackwell.—Several cottages in this village have recently been purchased by Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, and I hope very shortly to have them provided with proper yards and back premises. It was impossible for the late owner to do this, as the land right up to the back of the house walls was owned by Sir Henry. The sewers are regularly flushed every three weeks.

Brafferton.—A house unfit for habitation has been closed.

Cockerton.—A considerable amount of sanitary work has been carried out in this village, and the scavenging still continues satisfactory. The sanitary repairs to property in Forcett Street and Upper Forcett Street, owned by Mr. Fowle, Northallerton, have been commenced.

Haughton-le-Skerne.—A public enquiry has been held with a view to borrowing money for the purpose of sewerage this village, and I hope the work will soon be commenced. The Schools have been provided with water closets, which is a great improvement to the old earth closets.

Building operations still continue at Burdon Gate and on the Harrowgate Hill Estate. I should recommend that all the back streets on this estate should be paved. The scavenging still continues satisfactory.

Hurworth.—A great number of sanitary improvements have again been made in this village, and at Hurworth Place a flushing chamber has been put in on the road between Hurworth and Croft, at the end of the main sewer, and should be a great benefit in dry weather. The owner of some cottages at the east end of the village was summored for not complying with notices served on him to carry out certain work. I am informed, however, that the work has been commenced. I consider the scavenging of this village to be a great improvement, and in time it will probably be found that the number of infectious cases will decrease, as has been our experience at Haughton-le-Skerne, Middleton-St.-George, and Cockerton. Complaints were made during the year about the carting away of manure from the dépôts, but those, on enquiry, were found to be groundless.

Sadberge.—The two public wells in this village have been closed, in order to compel people to take a supply from the water mains. Samples from all private wells will be taken for analysis early in the new year.

Heighington.—A great many improvements have been carried out in this village during the year; houses remodelled, and new ones built; back yards paved; and the drainage improved as much as possible, although the sewerage of the village is not satisfactory.

Middleton-St.-George.—The scavenging is still satisfactory and I must repeat my suggestion made in last year's Annual Report, viz., that of paving back streets in this parish, receive your consideration.

Redworth.—Last year I suggested that the disposal of sewage from this village should receive your consideration. Tanks and continuous filters have now been erected and the effluent is very satisfactory.

Improvements, suggested during the year, to the Railway Cottages at Brussleton are being carried out, and should be a great advantage to the tenants.

A summary of the work for the year shows that the following notices have been complied with:—Pave yards, 26; New drains and trapped gullies, 14; Convert privy middens into earth closets or cover middens, 22; Spout houses, 9; Remove manure heaps, 3; Remove animals, 4; Houses closed unfit for habitation, 6.

A very great number of sanitary improvements have also been made without serving notices, but by verbal arrangement or by letter.

A general inspection of the Dairies and Cowsheds has been made. A great difficulty is found in getting many cowkeepers to keep their byres sufficiently clean and well ventilated; they seem to consider that a cow can only be kept healthy in winter when all fresh air is excluded. I have tried my utmost to impress on many of them the great advantage of cleanliness and fresh air. In many cases you will find a man milking a cow, the side hudder of which is coated

with dung. I have also known men taken direct from filling manure to milk cows, and not previously washing their hands. Many cow-keepers have no convenient place in which to put up milk for their customers, but have to use a pantry in which, probably, all kinds of eatables are kept. This is very objectionable, and where possible I have remedied this unsatisfactory method. During the year I submitted to your council a report on the bacteriological analysis of a few samples of milk, which was very startling and which goes to prove that milk sellers cannot be too careful in matters of cleanliness. Urban District Councils and Boroughs might be of great assistance to Rural District Councils in safeguarding against the dangers of impure or dirty milk by forming central stations within their area, where milk would be delivered from the Rural Districts and subject from time to time to bacteriological examination.

Samples of water have been taken from 16 different supplies; of these, 4 were found to be seriously polluted and 9 unfit for drinking purposes.

Where the water was seriously polluted new supplies have been obtained, and those unfit have been improved or new supplies obtained.

Plans for 51 new houses and alterations and additions to 4 houses have been approved by you during the year.

The following Schools have been closed during the year:—

Brifferton	from March 13th to 27th	for Measles
Sadberge	„ June 7th to 30th	„ „
Denton	„ July 5th to Aug 14th	„ „
Hurworth	„ Sept. 4th to 13th	Diphtheria

The general work of the Food and Drugs Act has been carried out by the County Council.

The Factory and Workshop Act has been carried out, the following works being visited:—Sadberge—Tan Yard; Dinsdale—Wire Works, Richards' Works and Plate Works (Iron); Middleton-St -George—Smelting Co.'s Works and Rural District Slag Works; Hurworth—Saddler's Shop, etc.; Piercebridge—Knitting Shop; Aycliffe and Heighington—All Shops to which the Act applies.

A great amount of work has been carried out by your Sanitary Department during the year, and your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Robinson, has been most assiduous in his duties.

You will find the usual tables and statistics for the last ten years attached.

Allow me to thank the Board and its Officers for their kindness and support in the discharge of my duties during the past year.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

ROBERT H. MEIKLE,
Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE 1.—VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.			DEATHS AT ALL AGES.			DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.			Deaths of Non-residents registered in public institutions in the District.		Deaths of Residents registered in public institutions beyond District.		DEATHS AT ALL AGES.		
		Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate.*		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1895	9367	198	21.1	28	141	135	14.4				135	14.4							
1896	9367	225	24	30	133	117	12.4				117	12.4							
1897	9367	224	23.9	17	76	104	11.7				104	11.7							
1898	9367	218	23.2	34	155	128	13.6				128	13.6							
1899	9367	222	23.7	18	81	136	13.9				136	13.9							
1900	9367	183	19.53	19	96.3	133	14.3				133	14.3							
1901	9591	163	16.99	29	177.8	126	13.13				126	13.1							
1902	9591	259	27.	20	77.2	107	11.1				107	11.1							
1903	9591	260	27.1	53	203.8	158	16.4				158	16.4							
1904	9591	255	26.5	35	137.2	145	15.1				8	14.5							
Averages for years 1895-1904.																			
1905	9591	279	29.0	30	107.5	154	16.0				10	10							

* Rates in Columns 4, 8 and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.
Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) 37,990.

Total population at all ages :: 9591
Number of inhabited houses :: 2365
Average number of persons per house 4

At Census of 1901.

TABLE II.—Vital Statistics of separate Localities in 1905 and previous years.

YEAR.	COCKERTON.	HAUGHTON-LE-SKERN.	HEIGHINGTON.	CONISCLIFFE.	MIDDLETON-ST.-GEORGE.	HURWORTH.			
						Deaths under 1 year.	Deaths at all Ages.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	
1895	..	1277	21	6	1281	20	3	2404	
1896	..	1277	15	4	1281	9	1	2404	
1897	..	1277	19	5	1281	16	1	2404	
1898	..	1277	24	6	1281	19	6	2404	
1899	..	1277	19	2	1281	20	4	2404	
1900	..	1277	25	1	1281	11	2	2404	
1901	..	1401	16	5	1195	22	7	2515	
1902	..	1401	10	3	1195	14	5	2515	
1903	..	1401	19	7	1195	14	3	2515	
1904	..	1401	23	9	1195	17	1	2515	
Averages of Years 1895-1904.		1326.6		19.1		4.8		1246.6	
						3.3		2448.4	
						31.7		6.0	
						1335.4		15.9	
						4.2		1301.2	
						22.1		5.5	
						1798.4		24.1	
						5		1835	
						37		5	
						1465		26	
						3		4	

TABLE III.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1905.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH LOCALITY.		No. OF CASES REMOVED TO HOSPITAL FROM EACH LOCALITY.
		HURWORTH.	COKERTON.	
Small-pox	1	1	2	5
Diphtheria	24	1	6	1
Membranous croup	...	11	6	2
Erysipelas	5	5	2	1
Scarlet fever	18	4	7	2
Enteric fever	4	...	4	1
Totals...	52	13	16	5

TABLE IV.—CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1905.

DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

Death-rate for each Parish, 1905.

Parish.	Total Deaths	Population	Death-rate per 1000.	Death-rate from Zymotic Diseases.
Cockerton	16	1024	15·6	
Haughton-le-Skerne	8	610	13·1	
Archdeacon Newton	...	68	...	
Aycliffe, Great	11	758	14·5	
Barmpton	1	100	10·	
Blackwell	7	372	18·8	
Brafferton	2	129	15·5	
Burdon, Great	3	89	33·7	
Coatham Mundeville	1	136	7·3	
Coniscliffe, High	2	302	6·6	
Coniscliffe, Low	2	113	17·6	
Denton	...	104	...	
Dinsdale, Low	6	238	25·2	
Heighington	12	652	18·4	
Houghton-le-Side	2	77	25·7	
Hurworth	20	1377	14·5	
Killerby	1	91	10·9	
Middleton-St.-George	31	1157	26·7	
Morton Palms	...	70	...	
Neasham	5	384	13	
Piercebridge	3	207	14·4	
Redworth	4	449	8·9	
Sadberge	9	396	22·7	
School Aycliffe	...	20	...	
Sockburn	1	74	13·5	
Summerhouse	3	95	31·5	
Walworth	1	122	8·1	
Whessoe	3	377	7·9	
Totals	154	9591	16	·6